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SUBJECT: TAJIK RESPONSE TO TIFA AGENDA

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[1](#)B. DUSHANBE 458

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: EconOff met on August 10 with Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade Larisa Kislyakova to discuss the draft agenda for the 4th U.S.-Central Asia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council meeting on October 8 (ref A). She said her ministry supports the draft agenda. During bilateral meetings with the U.S., the Tajik delegation will be particularly interested in discussing WTO accession, agricultural issues, and IMF concerns. Minister of Economic Development and Trade Ghulomjon Bobozoda will attend the meetings, subject to approval of President Rahmon. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Kislyakova, who had a central role in organizing the previous TIFA meeting in Dushanbe, appreciated our effort to solicit feedback on the upcoming TIFA agenda, although she said she was seeing the draft for the first time. (Note: Although Embassy Dushanbe had delivered the draft TIFA agenda by diplomatic note over a week before, key officials at the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade had still not received it when we contacted them on August 10. This shows some of the organizational challenges the Tajik government regularly faces. End note.) Two days after our meeting she confirmed by email that she had shared the agenda with Minister Ghulomjon Bobozoda, who will head the Tajik delegation, subject to approval from President Rahmon. Bobozoda approved the draft agenda and will send an updated note with more specific comments. Kislyakova noted that she was glad to see an emphasis on integrating Afghanistan within Central Asia.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Kislyakova and her boss were particularly interested in the bilateral meetings. She said Bobozoda would like to arrange four meetings with U.S. counterparts: (1) the Secretary of Commerce, to discuss trade and economic cooperation, and particularly the WTO; (2) the Secretary of Agriculture, to discuss supplying seed stocks to Tajikistan and other agriculture issues; (2) the Secretary of the Treasury, to discuss cooperation with the International Monetary Fund; and (4) the Department of State. She said the Tajik government would be particularly interested in discussing WTO issues, since the TIFA meetings will come shortly after Tajikistan participates in WTO accession discussions in Geneva on September [1](#)25.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Regarding the session organized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Bobozoda would like to see a discussion of issues related to energy, food processing and agriculture. Kislyakova expressed interest in organizing meetings with representatives from the business community to talk about these issues. She said it would be an opportunity for the Government of Tajikistan to publicize some of its recent moves to improve the investment

climate, including the establishment of a one-stop business registration process.

¶5. (SBU) Kislyakova said that a frustration with the multilateral Central Asian TIFA process has been that the partner countries are happy to engage in general discussion but reluctant to sign substantive agreements on specific points. She said she looked forward to a successful meeting in October, but implied that the bilateral meetings were more likely to yield substantive results.

¶6. (U) Kislyakova asked whether the U.S. would provide Russian translation at TIFA, or whether the Tajik delegation would have to seek out its own translators. If Department has any guidance we would appreciate it. She asked whether delegations would be expected to pay their own way. We said we presumed they would.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: Tajik government capacity remains minimal; our impression is that Kislyakova is one of the few, if not the only, people in the government conversant with TIFA issues. That said, the government appears to have a genuine interest in bilateral trade and investment discussions, where they see the potential for more substance. Their desire to talk about the IMF is a good sign, indicating they are taking to heart U.S. concerns about Tajikistan's financial transparency. And despite public pronouncements of brotherly affection and Kislyakova's comments, the government of Tajikistan overall remains deeply wary of Afghanistan. End comment.

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